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MAMMOTH CAVE, KY

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

CONTAINING A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL PLACES OF INTEREST IN THE CAVE, ALSO A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF

Colossal Cavern

BY

JOHN THOMPSON

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MAMMOTH CAVE,
Entrance looking out.

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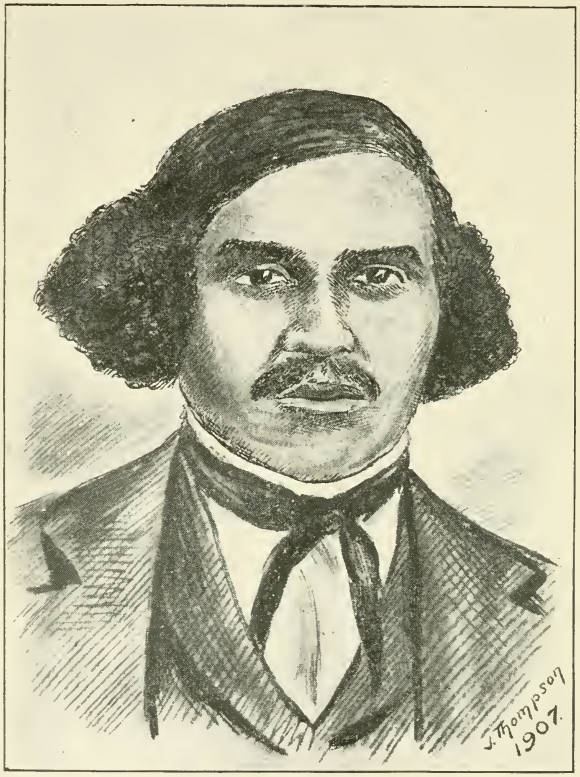
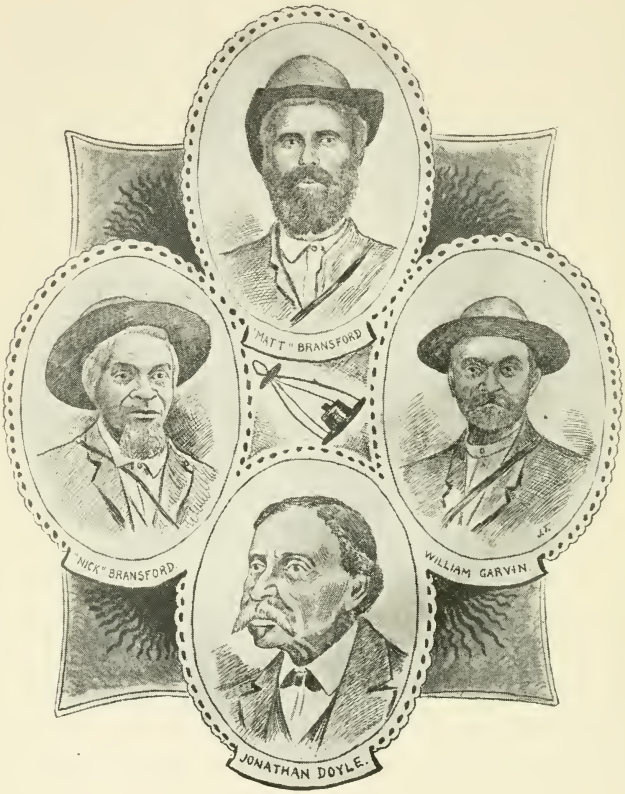
MAMMOTH CAVE, KY.

Wonderful Mammoth Cave! Wonderful it surely is, grand, weird and yet strangely fascinating. The realm of perpetual silence and everlasting night. Undoubtedly the greatest natural wonder in the western world. Human intellect is unable to realize or estimate the time required by the Almighty Architect of the universe to chisel out this gigantic cavern. The brain reels when one tries to fathom some of the mysteries to be seen on every hand—pits, domes, hills, valleys, pools and rivers are to be found in this strange place, all shrouded in Stygian darkness. This, the largest of all caves, is situated in Edmonson county, about ninety miles south of Louisville, near the main line of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. It is claimed that about one hundred and fifty-two miles of avenues have been explored; but the tourist visiting the cave only sees those parts that are most easy of access. What is known as the "Long Route" is said to be about fourteen miles in length, and the "Short Route" is about seven miles in length. The average visitor is generally satisfied after traveling twenty-one miles underground; but there are lots of interesting side trips in the cave that are well worth going to see. There are a number of other caves in this vicinity that are well worthy of a visit, if one has the time and inclination to explore them; but none can compare with Mammoth Cave in size. Ganter's Cave is situated on the banks of Green River not far from the Mammoth Cave boat-landing. This is a wonderfully interesting cave, showing marvelous stalactite and stalagmite formations, also beautiful "Colossal Cavern," which is described in the latter part of this book. Volumes could be written about this remarkable cave region of Kentucky, embracing four or five counties where hundreds of caves are situated, but the author of this little book will confine himself to giving a brief history and description of Mammoth and Colossal Caves, avoiding dry scientific terms and details.



STEPHEN BISHOP,
First guide and explorer of the Mammoth Cave.
(Copied from an old wood cut.)

As mentioned above, about one hundred and fifty-two miles of avenues have been explored. In parts of the main avenue, especially that portion beyond the "Star Chamber," there is evidences that the cave was known to the Indians or some prehistoric people. Only a few years ago hundreds of torches could be found if one took the trouble to pick them up, lying between the rocks on the floor of the cave. The aboriginies that used them prepared the torch from the hollow reeds that are found growing plentifully on the banks of Green River. The dry reeds were then filled up with fat, and when ignited would no doubt make a very satisfactory torch. In the "Great Salt Cave" some of the rocks are worn smooth where people have passed to and fro wandering about in this underground world long years before the white man ever sat foot on this continent. Who knows but that perhaps the red man visited these caves out of curiosity as we of the twentieth century are doing? Although it is more likely that the caves were used as places of refuge when tribes were at war with one another. An occasional flint arrow or spear point can even to this day be found by the diligent searcher around the entrance of some of the caves. Places also have been found where they evidently manufactured the stone points, however that was done. Human bones are occasionally unearthed in some of the caves, testifying that many an unfortunate being has met his death in the early days when the outlaw and Indian roamed through this country. The well preserved mummified remains of a woman were found in the Great "Salt" Cave about the year 1875 by William Cuttliff, a cave explorer. This mummy was afterwards exhibited at Mammoth Cave, Proctor's Cave and in the "Grand Avenue" Cave. For a time it was exhibited in a number of cities throughout the country. None of the scientists who viewed it could tell whether the remains were those of a modern white woman or an Indian woman. The writer found fragments of human bones together with some interesting pieces of shell and slate, evidently used as ornaments or utensils, while exploring Cox's Cave in October, 1905. They



NOTED CAVE GUIDES.

FOUR famous old time guides whose familiar faces will be recognized by the older generation of cave visitors.

are now in the possession of Prof. Sherzer, of Ypsilanta State College, Ypsilanta, Mich., and that gentleman states, after a thorough examination, that the bones are evidently those of an ancient stone age man, and of great scientific interest. Human remains have also been found in Mammoth Cave. The guides point to a niche in the rock forming the sides of Gothic Avenue, which is called the "Mummy's Seat," where it is claimed that early explorers found a human mummy. There is no doubt that further exploration will reveal further proof that the caves were frequented by the ancient inhabitants of this country. No doubt it would be found, if all possible passages were followed out, that all the caves are one continuous series of subterranean channels.

To a geologist this section of Kentucky is very interesting. He will see how the waters have cut away the rocks, and as ages passed by the avenues in the caves were slowly formed. There has evidently been a rushing river tearing its way through what is now the main avenue, "Broadway," as the guides call it, in Mammoth Cave, and man's puny mind is unable to realize the time that nature required to form that grand, lofty cavern. Immense rocks, detached no doubt from the ceiling overhead are scattered around in wild disorder; and then after the avenues have been formed it has required aeons of time for the stalactite formations to grow. The pyramids of Egypt are but the work of yesterday in comparison.

Mammoth Cave was first discovered by the white man in the year 1809. The story goes that a hunter named Houchins chased a wounded bear in the yawning gulf that forms the entrance. Whether he explored it to any extent on that occasion will never be known; but his story of the immense cavern spread rapidly even in that early day. During the war of 1812 large quantities of saltpeter was leached from the "peter dirt" contained in the floor of the cave and used by the government in the manufacture of gunpowder. About the year 1811 the cave and about two hundred acres of land were purchased by a certain Mr. Gatewood,

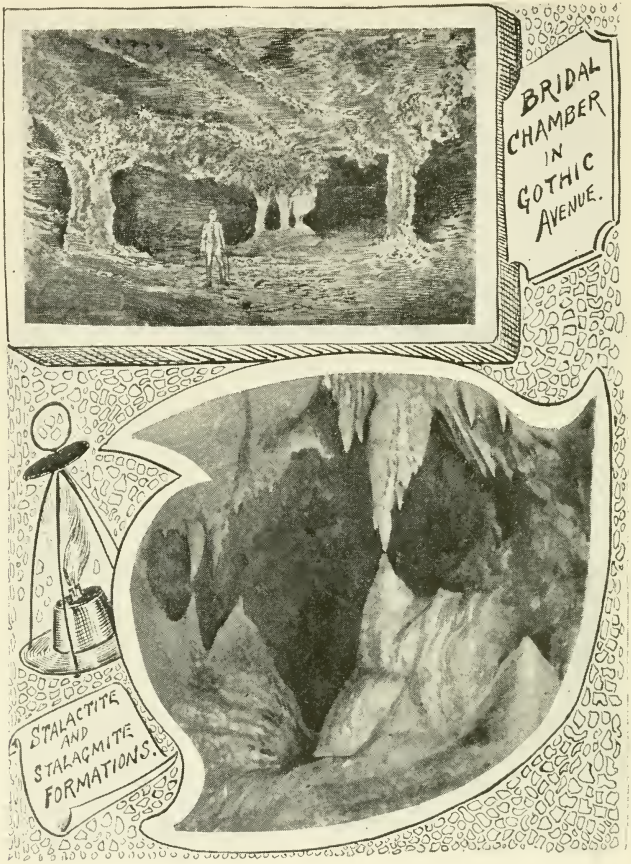
who afterward disposed of it to Gratz and Wilkins. The old saltpeter vats, erected by these gentlemen in the cave, are still there, the wood showing hardly any traces of decay after all these ninety-seven years. It is said that they made a considerable fortune from the sale of saltpeter. Mr. Frank Gorin purchased the cave in the year 1837, and opened it up to the traveling public. Stephen Bishop and Matt Bransford, negroes, were used as guides. In 1839 the cave was purchased by Dr. John Croghan, a Louisville physician, and on his death the estate was left to his nephews and nieces. After their death it has to be sold and the money that it brings equally divided among the descendants of the original heirs.

A two-minutes' walk from the terminus of the M. C. Railway brings us to the Cave Hotel, a quaint old building that is a survival of the "South before the war," and reminds one of the old days long gone by never to return. It was originally built out of logs, but from time to time improvements have been made and the old logs have been weatherboarded over, although at the present time a row of old log cabins forming a part of the hotel building carries us back in imagination to the early days when old Daniel Boone and his hardy followers first braved the anger of the hostile red man and built their cabins in the wilderness. The hotel is situated on the top of a ridge within twenty minutes' walk from beautiful Green River, which flows through the valley three hundred and fifty feet below. It is surrounded with grand old trees, and a view from the broad veranda across the lawn is very pretty and restful indeed. Here is a delightful spot to rest for a few days—good water in abundance and pure, bracing air. If one is fond of fishing, boats can be had at the Mammoth Cave landing, and the angler will be well rewarded if he cares to while away a few hours with rod and line.

Arriving at the hotel and partaking of a good old country dinner, we purchase tickets and don the costumes provided for our subterranean journey. Presently our guide makes his appearance with lamps, torches, etc., and we start on our trip down

the gravel walk, through the old wooden gate, and down the ravine. We arrive at the mouth of the cave before we are aware of it. Here all is hushed and quiet, the tall, green trees cast a soothing shadow over everything. The first sound to greet our ears is that of falling water. In a moment more we see to our right an immense opening forty feet deep, and feel refreshed by the cool cave air as it forces its way to the upper world. The water that we heard a moment ago is seen pouring over a ledge of rock directly over the arch that forms the roof of the cave. As we are all anxious to start, we proceed down the stone steps, halting a moment until the guide lights our lanterns. Here we stand; behind us the world is green and joyful, all nature is smiling and the glorious sun is shining overhead; before us, what? Impenetrable gloom. One can't keep back an uncanny feeling as he moves, half-seeing, half-groping after the guide, toward the iron gate, for our eyes are not yet accustomed to the gloom. Arriving at the gate, we give up our tickets and commence our mysterious journey in earnest.

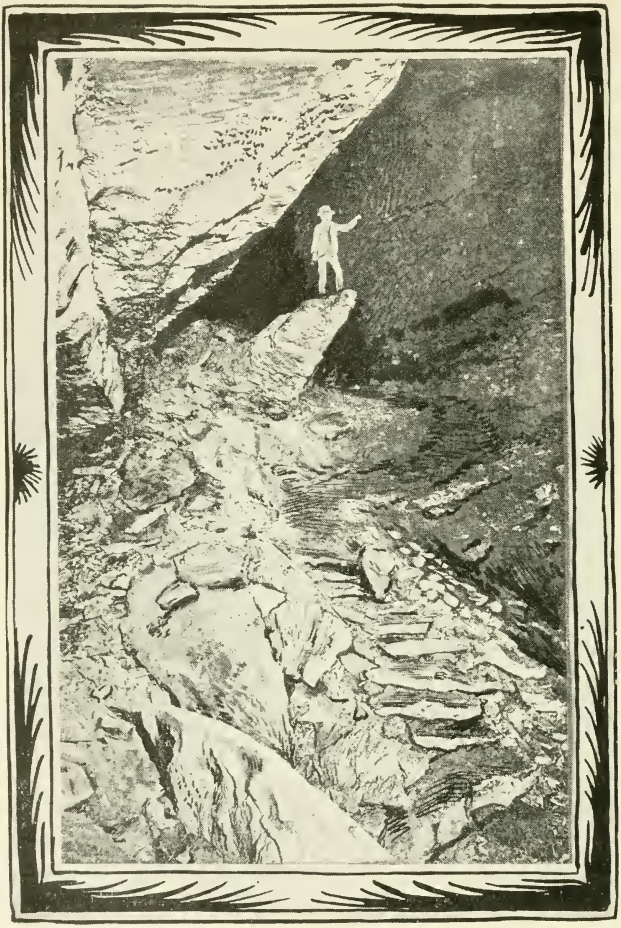
Here at the gate the ceiling is so low that it is necessary to stoop considerably if you don't want to bump your head. We are now started on the "Short Route," and our guide calls our attention to the stone carefully piled on either side of our path. These rocks were piled here by the saltpeter miners nearly one hundred years ago. This narrow passage is called Hutchings' Narrows. Presently we realize that we are going down hill, and the ceiling is getting higher above our heads at every step. The avenue keeps growing wider, until at last we find ourselves in the "Rotunda." Our guide informs us that this immense chamber is directly under the dining room of the hotel, two hundred feet above our heads. The ceiling of the cave here is about forty feet high, and it is about one hundred and fifty feet wide from wall to wall in its widest part. Here we see the vats used by the early miners. Examining the large wooden pipes, we find that although they have laid in the cave for almost one hundred years, yet they are wonderfully well preserved, due,



Fully fourteen marriages have taken place in the "Bridal Chamber" in Gothic Avenue the most remarkable Avenue in Mammoth Cave.

no doubt, to the dry, even temperature of the cave. Audubon Avenue leads off to the right, and we go up this avenue for about half a mile until we arrive at the end of the cave in this direction. Here the guide shows us some beautiful stalactite formations, known as "Olive's Bower." We now retrace our steps back to the Rotunda and down the main cave. This majestic avenue averages about fifty feet in width by forty in height, and is perfectly dry. As we continue on we pass the "Kentucky Cliffs" on our left, so named because of their resemblance to the cliffs on the banks of the Kentucky River in the vicinity of Frankfort. Next the "Pigeon Boxes," and in a few minutes we find ourselves in the "Methodist Church." At this point there is an enlargement in the cave; up the side wall there is a shelf or gallery, large enough for several persons to stand on, and from this rude pulpit, situated as it is in the realm of eternal darkness, the Gospel of Love and Light has been preached on different occasions. We next approach a portion of the cave where "Gothic Avenue" branches off from the main cave. At this point, on a rock projecting high above our heads, Edwin Booth, the eminent tragedian, on one occasion gave some selections from Shakespeare, to the delight of a few friends who were fortunate enough to hear him in such an unconventional theatre. Since that time this place is known as "Booth's Ampitheatre."

Leaving the main cave, we ascend a flight of steps directly in front of us and find ourselves in "Gothic Avenue." This is one of the highest avenues in the cave. The wonderful stalactite and stalagmite formations are principally toward the end. Here we found piles of rocks dedicated to the different States of the Union, and for every patriotic Kentuckian or New Yorker, or wherever he may hail from, it is customary to pick up a stone and add it to your monument. On our left, in a little niche in the wall, our guide showed us the "Mummy's Seat," before mentioned. Here a mummy reposed for some time. Some claim that it was originally found there.



"LOVERS LEAP" GOTHIC AVENUE.
MAMMOTH CAVE, KENTUCKY.

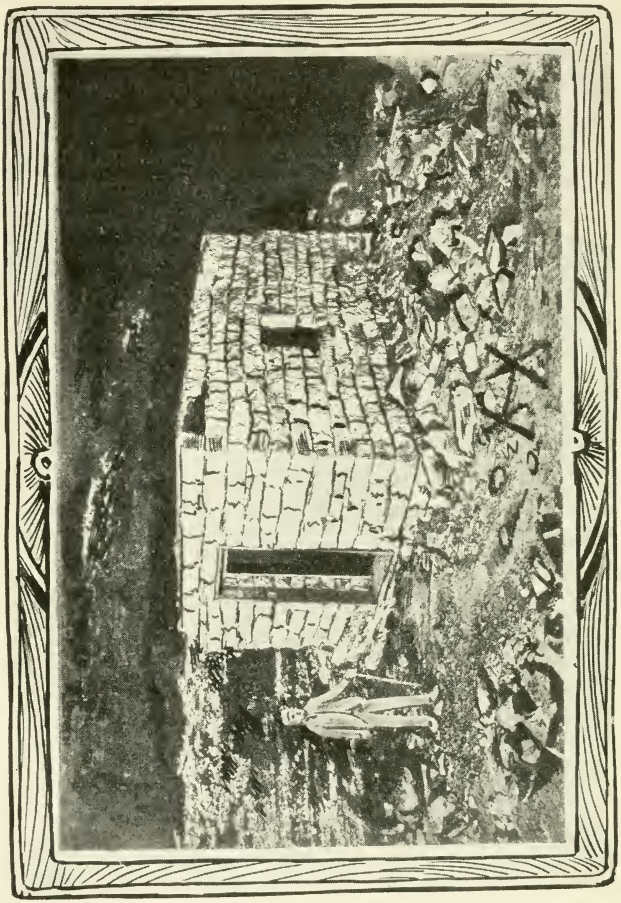
We next arrive at the "Post Oak" pillar, the first stalagmite met with so far in this avenue. Hearing a rumbling sound, our guide tells that the little Mammoth Cave Railroad was running above our heads, so we began to realize that in this part of the cavern we were quite near the surface. Numerous stalactite formations are to be seen hanging in thick, heavy masses from the ceiling. Here we see a large pillar known as the "Old Arm Chair," and the guide informs us that Jenny Lind, the celebrated Swedish singer of fifty years ago, used this as a chair to rest on while walking through this avenue. Shortly we arrive at the "Elephant's Heads" minus the trunks, and further on the "Hornets' Nests." Next we approach the "Bridal Chamber," and a beautiful place it is. Here stalagmites rise from floor to ceiling, a group of four forming the "Altar," with "Cæsar" and "Pompey" and the "Pillar of Hercules" standing close by. This is one of the most interesting chambers in the cavern. Our guide tells us that a number of marriages have taken place in this strange room. Next we see the "Lover's Leap." Whether he was one of the lovers that was married at the Bridal Altar or not, we were unable to discover.

We have now reached the end of Gothic Avenue, and retrace our steps back to the main cave. Taking a farewell glance at the "Old Arm Chair," our guide burns some red and blue lights in the "Bridal Chamber," giving it the appearance of some enchanted grotto. The "Pillar of Hercules" deserves mention here, it being the largest stalagmite in this avenue. After a few minutes' brisk walk we arrive back in the main avenue. The guide calls our attention to the cart-wheel marks and ox tracks, made ninety-six years ago when the miners were employed here. We next pass the "Standing Rocks" and then the "Water Clock," where if you stand for a moment you will hear water dropping somewhere that suggests the ticking of a clock.

Presently we arrive at the "Giant's Coffin," perhaps the largest detached rock in the cave. It measures about forty feet in length and strikingly resembles an enormous coffin. Above our

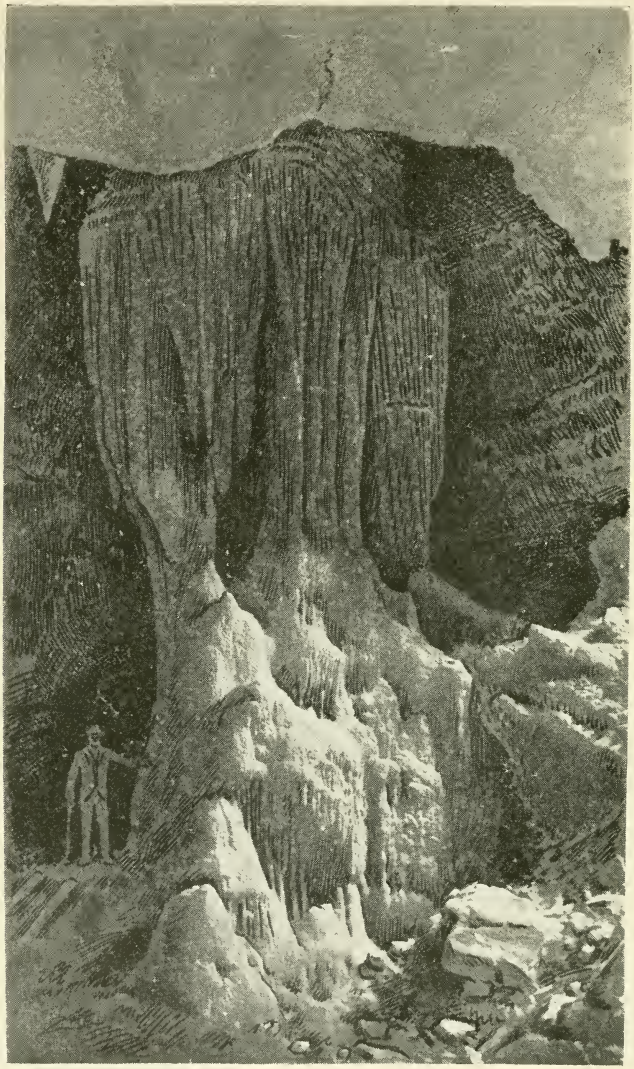
heads we see the "Ant Eater," a patch of black oxide of manganese on the limestone ceiling. There are lots of other figures noticed as we proceed which bear resemblance to familiar objects. The "Giant and Giantess Tossing Their Baby," the "Hen and Chickens," and numerous other figures are pointed out by the guide. Next we arrive at the "Stone Cottages," built in 1843 for the accommodation of a number of unfortunate people who were afflicted with consumption. It was supposed that the dry, even temperature of the cave would be beneficial, but the experiment proved a failure. Next we approach the "Star Chamber." Here the guide bids us be seated on a bench skirting the wall to our right, and proceeds to relieve us of our lamps, moving off to the opposite side of the chamber. He enters a small passageway, allowing only a very faint light to illuminate the room. Now if one looks up, instead of seeing the customary gray or mottled limestone roof of the cave, he will behold what appears to be myriads of stars flashing and twinkling in the eternal heavens. We can easily imagine ourselves sitting in a dismal canon on a moonlit night, and if a meteor should suddenly shoot across the roof of the cave we would not be at all surprised, everything seems so natural. Now the guide announces that heavy black clouds will obscure the stars from view, and, sure enough, in a few minutes we find ourselves in total darkness, so dark that it seems you can feel it. What would we do if anything should happen to our guide! You involuntarily feel in your pocket for a match and are pleased to find that you have several. This wonderful cave is truly a subterranean world in itself, and we can easily imagine it peopled with gnomes and goblins. Deep pits, high cliffs, mysterious rivers and pools weird and wonderful beyond the power of mortal man to describe. This is the kingdom of silence and perpetual night, and so it shall remain until the end of time. The stars have disappeared and we are sitting in silence meditating on the wonders we have seen, when suddenly we hear the sound of a rooster crowing, which is repeated several times in rapid succession. We hear dogs barking and

fighting; the sound of a couple of cats crying; the lowing of a cow and other familiar barnyard sounds. Our guide has proved himself to be a capital mimic. As he approaches he announces that daylight is breaking. By degrees the light gets up a little higher, and a welcome sight it is indeed. At last he returns to us, and, after relighting our lamps, we start back towards the mouth of the cave, having thoroughly enjoyed the "Star Chamber." Again we pass the Cottages, and on we go retracing our steps until we reach the "Giant's Coffin," and at this point we halt. Crossing the cave we descend down a narrow passage-way directly behind the coffin. This passage leads down to the third level of the cave, where are to be found the wonderful pits and domes. The best known are "Gorin's Dome," the "Bottomless Pit," "Mammoth Dome," "Napoleon's Dome" and the "Side Saddle" pit. The "Bottomless Pit" has a bottom, but it is very deep nevertheless. The "Bridge of Sighs" spans this pit. Standing on the bridge we look up and see "Shelby's Dome," named after Governor Shelby of Kentucky. Over this deep pit old Stephen Bishop, the first guide, cautiously crept on a slender pole. Until then no man had ever dared to cross it. This occurred about 1840. Shortly afterward the wonderful Echo River was discovered. The writer will not try to describe this portion of the cave. It is something that, to say the least, is simply awe-inspiring. These awful pits have wonderfully fluted sides, as smooth as if they had been chiseled by a sculptor. Retracing our steps up into the main cave, we are once more facing the "Giant's Coffin." Here the ceiling is forty feet above our heads, and it is much better walking. After a few minutes we start back toward the entrance. Before proceeding very far our guide informs us that he is about to show us the last feature and perhaps the prettiest sight on the short route. Bidding us stand for a few minutes holding the lamp behind our backs, he leaves us for only a couple of minutes, going in the direction of the mouth of the cave. Hearing a shrill whistle, we look straight ahead of us, and directly in front, perhaps sixty yards from where we stand, can be seen



THE CONSUMPTIVES' COTTAGE.

the figure of a woman, white as alabaster, standing out in bold relief against a black background. This is known as the "Martha Washington Statue." It has also been called the "Woman in White," and simply the statue; but whatever name it is known by makes little difference—it is a beautiful illusion and leaves a lasting impression on everyone who has the pleasure of seeing it. Each side of the "Statue" is produced by the opposite walls of the cave, which at this part makes several turns. Old William Garvin, the noted guide, claimed the honor of discovering this curious illusion. According to his story, one of his fellow-guides was escorting a party in the cave and had made a bright light near the old saltpeter vats, close to "Booth's Amphitheatre." William was on his way out, not hearing the party approaching and thinking himself entirely alone in the cave. Imagine his surprise, not to say fright, at seeing a white, ghost-like figure suspended in the darkness before him. For a few minutes he was so frightened that he stood rooted to the spot, and as he looked, strangely fascinated, slowly the figure faded away and dissolved itself in the darkness. William said he was thoroughly frightened, but throughout it all he never lost his nerve. Taking a firmer grip on his staff, he continued on his journey to the entrance and to daylight, resolved that if the ghost did take a notion to play any pranks on him he would signify his disapproval by making liberal use of his cane. In a few minutes the sound of merry voices greeted his ears, and as he met the good-natured explorers he was sensible enough to hide his frightened feelings behind a broad smile. He did not mention anything about his experience to any of them, but as he kept on walking he glanced back to see what progress they were making. Noticing the curve in the cave, the thought suddenly flashed across his mind that perhaps his ghost, after all, was only an illusion. This idea once established in his mind determined him to make another trip and satisfy himself. William was a very bright, shrewd guide, and far better educated than the average negro was at that time. He said that the next trip fully verified his supposition. This oc-



THE "TOWER OF BABEL."
Gigantic stalagmite formations in Hundred Dome Cave.
Edmonson Co., Kentucky.

curred about the year 1882, but it was not until some years later that the "Statue" was exhibited to the public. After viewing this pretty illusion for a few minutes, we start on our homeward journey. Passing in turn the "Standing Rocks," the "Ball Room," the "Saltpeter Vats" and finally the "Church," arriving again at the "Rotunda," our guide bids us wait a few minutes. He once more illuminates this enormous chamber. The sight is one long to be remembered. We are standing facing the south. To our right Audubon Avenue branches off, while straight in front continues the main cave. Here is a temple built by the Almighty Himself ages before the human race commenced, surpassing by far anything that could be built by human hands. Standing in this chamber I suddenly forgot that I was one of a jovial party; for a time their voices seemed to be hushed, and in imagination I could see the ancient Indians standing and crouching in groups, perhaps holding council of war with some of their neighboring tribes. And yet again in my mind's eye I could go farther back before the human family had sprung into existence, and still here was this great cavern, but how different! A mighty river of water was tearing its way through the avenues, beating and lashing the stone wall with a deafening roar. All nature seemed to be undergoing some awful convulsion. But I was not allowed to speculate long on the origin of this remarkable place, for our guide had already started out toward the "Narrows," and in a couple of minutes we were peering through the iron gate, thoroughly glad to see the sunlight again. It is indeed a pleasure, after one has roamed around in the bowels of the earth, to again see the smiling sun. The rich, green grass and the luxurious trees never looked so inviting to us as they do now, as we ascend the stone steps and arrive again on the surface of mother earth. Back again we go to the hotel, where we partake of a substantial meal, served in true old Kentucky style. We decided to take the "Long Route" the following morning.

THE MUMMIES.

No. 1. Found in the Great Salt Cave about 1875.

No. 2. Said to have been found in Mammoth Cave. Copied from an old drawing.

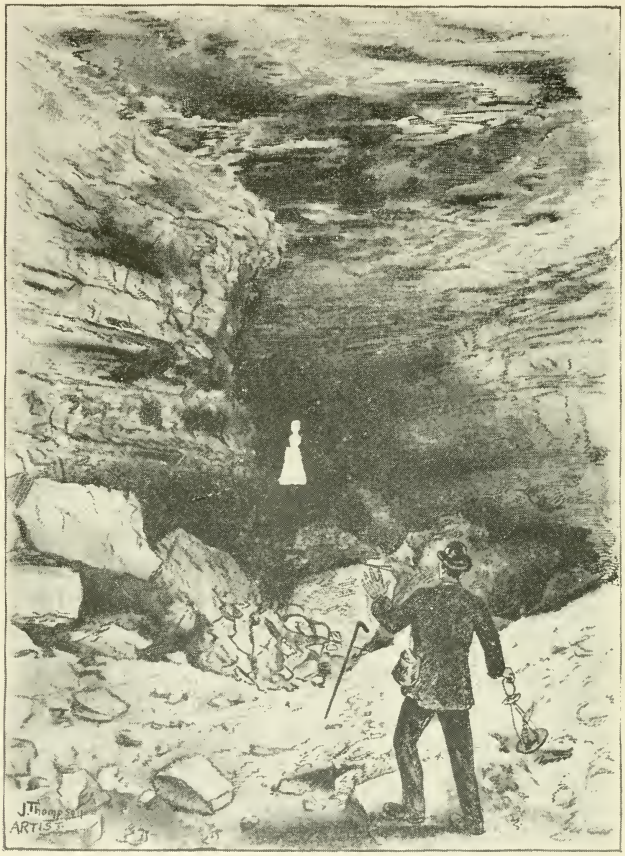
That afternoon I took my camera and started rambling through the beautiful park surrounding the hotel and cave, thinking that I might be able to "snap" something as a souvenir of my visit, and, sure enough, I happened on a quaint old grave yard on a hill high up above and overlooking Green River, just a short walk from the Cave Hotel. Here is where Stephen Bishop's remains lie buried, near the cave he knew so well. Stephen in his day guided many noted people through the cave, and his knowledge of geology was astonishing for one who had no means of learning it except by coming in contact with cultured people whom he had escorted through the cave. It is said that he would talk for hours on scientific subjects, often using Greek and Latin words, and was never known to make an error. Bayard Taylor was greatly impressed with him. Bishop was undoubtedly the first mortal to ever see the Echo River and the first to ride on its waters. A neat, white marble slab is erected over his grave, the picture of which can be seen in the end of this book. "Matt" and "Nick" Bransford also achieved fame as guides and explorers. William Garvin was another well-known guide. He was first to go through the "Corkscrew." All of the old negro guides are dead, with one exception; his name has not yet been mentioned—old Uncle Johnathan Doyle—who in his prime was a good guide. He can still be seen occasionally walking about at the ripe old age of eighty-eight years. He still retains the full use of all his faculties. He it was who discovered "Proctor's Cave," which is situated midway between Glasgow Junction and Mammoth Cave. Back in slave times, when the negroes were bought and sold like cattle, the story goes that Jonathan had ran away from his master. It was just before the civil war and there was considerable unrest among the negroes. While wandering in the hills dodging those who might have been seeking him, Jonathan found an opening in the rock that looked like a good place to hide should occasion require it. Only a few days after he was forced to seek shelter and safety in that identical crevice. His master had got word that he was in this neighbor-

WONDERFUL "STAR CHAMBER."

hood, and with a party had started to round him up; but Jonathan happily had heard of their movements in time. Supplying himself with matches, a good lantern and a large flask of oil, also sufficient food to last several days, he resolved that the only way to confound his pursuers was to crawl in the hole in the rock. Accordingly, when he saw them approaching and seeing that escape by any other means was impossible, he started in. The result was that after considerable crawling, he found that he had virtually tumbled into a beautiful cavern, abounding in wonderful calcite formations, which afterward became known to the world as "Proctor's Cave." Uncle Jonathan eventually went back to his master. The civil war soon afterwards, and with it the emancipation proclamation to the slaves, it was no longer necessary for him to hide in caves and swamps. Shortly afterward he found honorable employment at the Mammoth Cave, and for many years the old ex-slave was a familiar figure to the cave visitors.

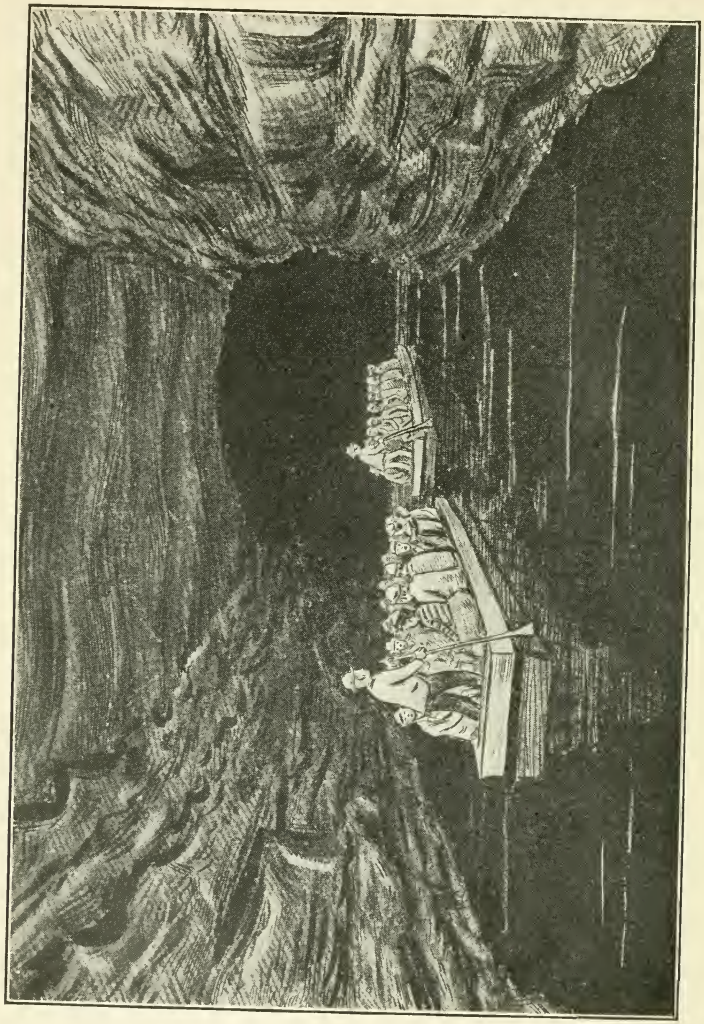
Among the white men who have guided in years gone by might be mentioned the following: Charles Demumdrum, Frank Demumdrum, Sant. and Abe. Meredith, John Lee, J. M. Hunt and John Nelson, all of whom were good, trustworthy guides.

As I said before, we had decided not to start on the "Long Route" until the following morning. Just to while away the afternoon, I took a stroll down to the banks of beautiful Green River. Here can be seen two places where it is said Echo and Styx Rivers empty out from the cave. Here on the banks of Green River the scenery is very beautiful. While resting under the shade of the large trees that line the banks of the river an excursion boat from Evansville, Ind., arrived with a merry party of people bent on seeing the cave. I was told that there are annually about thirteen thousand visitors to see the cave. Quite a number come by boat, but the great majority, of course, come by rail. Large numbers of students visit the cave every season, especially those who attend schools in Cincinnati, Nashville and Louisville, and some of the smaller cities and towns in Kentucky and Tennessee.



Guide William Garvin, discovering the
"MARTHA WASHINGTON STATUTE."

After a good night's rest at the hotel, and having partaken of a good breakfast, we were not long in donning our comical cave costumes. This time we had a colored man in our party, or rather he proceeded ahead of us, carrying a large basket filled with lunches for our noon-day meal in the cave. This trip covers over the same ground as on our previous journey, until we get to the "Bottomless Pit." Here we continue on straight ahead until we come to what is called "Revellers' Hall." Now we turn to the left and proceed cautiously under a dangerous looking rock that is called "The Scotchman's Trap." Ages ago this immense rock dropped from the ceiling and almost closed up the avenue. However, it luckily fell in such a manner that there is considerable opening through which we creep, breathing much easier after getting on the other side. Continuing some little distance through this remarkable cavern, we presently arrive at the "Fat Man's Misery." This curious passage is about one hundred yards long and from fifteen to twenty inches wide. Here it is impossible to walk erect, as from floor to ceiling it is only about four feet in height. Here is illustrated the beautiful effects of the water's action on the soluble limestone. Through this narrow winding passage the water has been forced for thousands of years, and now on the walls as we squeeze our way through the very waves and ripples can be seen in the solid rock. It is impossible for two persons to pass each other in this avenue, and especially unpleasant for one person to get through if they should happen to be fleshy, hence its name. Our backs are on the point of breaking, and it was pleasant news indeed when the guide called out "Great Relief." Here we could stand up straight and stretch our necks and enjoy a few minutes' rest. The ceiling in this portion of the cave has a peculiar formation called the "Odd Fellows' Links," which looks like three large links of a chain stretched across the avenue. It is produced by the presence of iron in the limestone which forms the ceiling. A little farther on we come to that remarkable place called "Bacon Chamber." Here the action of the water on the roof has produced some strange figures in the



ECHO RIVER. 360 Feet Underground.

limestone, some look very much like sides of bacon, hams, etc. We are now getting in the vicinity of "River Hall," which is situated deep down in the lower level of the cave. This lofty chamber is about three hundred feet from the surface, and the view here is grand, when it is properly lit up. The dismal waters of the "Dead Sea" presently come to our view. This pool, for such it is, lies far below us, and it is well named. There are few gloomier places than this to be found anywhere. One feels as if he were groping through the abode of evil spirits, souls that are forever cut off from the light. "River Styx" and "Lake Lethe" are the next two points of interest. At the time we made our trip the rivers were low, but on some occasions in the fall and winter the waters are much higher. We are now rapidly approaching the wonderful subterranean stream appropriately called "Echo River." Here one can ride for about half a mile on flat-bottom boats, and it is an experience never to be forgotten. When we get to the river we find three large boats moored along the rocky shore. Our guide directs us to step in one of the boats and seat ourselves, an equal number on each side. In a few minutes we are silently floating down the river. The charm of this river is its marvellous echo, and still it can hardly be called an echo in the ordinary sense of the word, for when slowly singing "My Old Kentucky Home," "The Old Oaken Bucket," or other familiar ballads, a single voice will begin to sound like an orchestra. The wonderful turns and curves in the cave around us has, no doubt, a subtle effect upon any sound that may be produced here, and as the last words of the singer cease, we sit enraptured listening to the sweet seraphic sounds dying away in the uttermost parts of the cavern. In these underground waters, hundreds of feet from sunlight, are found curious little blind fish and crabs or crawfish. They are seldom over three inches in length and of a white or light gray color, and quite transparent. Upon close inspection the little fish seem to be a species of degenerated catfish. There are really no eyes to be seen. They have existed in these underground waters for generations, and

by degrees the power of sight has left them until as ages went by even the eyes disappeared. We were astonished when our guide informed us that these fish are viviparous. At last we arrive at the end of the river and disembark. The guide securely fastens the boat and we find ourselves in "Cascade Hall." This is a rough chamber. We continue on into "Silliman's Avenue," named after Prof. Benjamin Silliman. This is an interesting avenue, and continues for near a mile and a half. It measures on an average of twenty-four feet in width by about thirty feet in height. The guide next announces "Wellington's Gallery," and shortly afterwards we arrive at the "Dripping Spring." Here the thirsty traveler can refresh himself in the cool lime-water as it drips from the ceiling. Then we come to the following places in the order given: "The Infernal Regions," which is a very rough, slippery and disagreeable place to travel through; it is well named. The "Sea Serpent" above our heads is merely a crevice in the roof of the cave. The "Valley Way Side Cut" is next announced by the guide. After walking quite a distance, we are at the "Hill of Fatigue," and by the time we clamber to the top, we all conclude that it is a tiresome trip. Here we come to a sharp turn in the cave and see the "Stern of the Great Western." It looks like the stern of a great boat carved in the solid rock. Next "Stephen's Gallery" comes in view, named in honor of old Stephen, the first guide. After traveling through a rough portion of the cave for some time, we arrive at the "Valley of Flowers." Here at one time have been some beautiful gypsum formations, but it has been sadly smoked by the thousands of thoughtless tourists who have visited the cave in years gone by. The guide next calls our attention to "Ole Bull's Concert Hall." Many years ago that famous violinist entertained a number of friends in this part of Silliman's Avenue, which has been named in his honor. Continuing our walk, our guide announces the "Pass of El Ghor." For quite one mile and a half the avenue receives that name. The "Fly Chamber" looks as if there were thousands of flies on the ceiling of the cave. Next "Victoria's

Crown," and it is a very good imitation of a stone crown of gigantic dimensions. "Corinne's Dome" comes next in order, and shortly afterwards we are shown the "Black Hole of Calcutta," a pit on the left side of the passage which, in spite of its name, is only a few feet deep. It had to be distinguished by some name, so that was better than nothing. We shortly arrive at "William's Canon," a part of this avenue named after Uncle William Garvin, the old guide of a past generation. After walking for a few minutes we arrive at "Jacob's Ladder," a steep flight of steps leading to a higher part of the cave. After resting for a few minutes we begin to ascend the ladder, arriving at "Martha's Vineyard." This is a pretty place, and some enormous grapes hanging on the wall of the cave excite one's admiration. They are nothing but stone, but it requires little effort of the imagination to picture them as some kind of giant grapes. By this time we were all feeling a little tired and decidedly hungry. We had not seen our colored lunch-carrier since crossing Echo River, and were all wondering what had become of him. At last, after walking for about half an hour, we arrived at "Washington Hall," and were highly pleased to find a tempting lunch awaiting us. Fine steaming coffee, chicken sandwiches and sweet cakes were arranged on the table all ready for us to devour, which we did in quick order. The negro that carried our lunches must have hurried on ahead of us in spite of the heavy basket he carried, or perhaps he arrived in this chamber by some short cut. There has evidently been thousands of people dine here before us, as fragments of broken bottles and scraps of paper and bread crusts are to be seen in several places lying behind some of the large rocks on the floor of the hall. There were sixteen persons in our party at dinner, and some one asked how many states were represented, so we discovered that New York State led, there being four, Ohio came next with three, two from Wisconsin, one from California, one from Louisiana, and one from Kentucky. Our Kentucky friend said it was his first visit to the cave, although he had been across the continent half a dozen times.

"RUINS OF KARNAK" in Mammoth Dome.

Two Canadians, one Englishman and a German gentleman completed our party. It seems strange that there are so many Kentuckians, who have been at every other place of interest in the country, and still have neglected to go to their own great wonder. There are hundreds living within twenty-five miles of the cave who have never been to see it.

Well, it is time that we resumed our trip, as the cave air is quite chilly if one remains sitting too long. We soon enter one of the most beautiful parts of the whole cavern—"Cleveland's Cabinet," the guide announces. Here the formations of gypsum are beautiful and glisten in the lamplight. Presently we arrive at the "Snowball Chamber." The ceiling of the cave here looks exactly as if snowballs had been tossed up there and became frozen to the roof. This portion of the cave is full of strange formations, which sprout out on the walls and ceilings glistening like gems with every movement of your lamp. "Diamond Grotto," also "St. Cecelia's Grotto," are beautiful sights to see. A little farther our guide points out a cross in the ceiling produced by gypsum roses forming in two crevices which intersect each other at right angles. For a long distance on this part of our trip we pass through some beautiful gypsum formations, the beauty of which it is simply impossible to describe. In some places the walls and ceiling dazzle the eyes like a million diamonds, in other places the formation looks like flowers of every variety—lilies, violets, morning glories, roses, daisies and a hundred other kinds, all as white as the driven snow. After viewing these sights, we continue on our journey until we arrive at an immense pile of stones that thousands of years ago must have fallen from the roof of the cave. This the guide called "The Rocky Mountains," and one readily agrees that it is a rocky mountain after he has climbed to the top of it. Arriving there, we see "Cleopatra's Needle," a stalagmite, and high above our heads is an immense dome. This is the end of our journey, and after a short rest we commenced our return trip, viewing in turn the different sights that have already been described. We never get tired looking

THE "CORKSCREW."

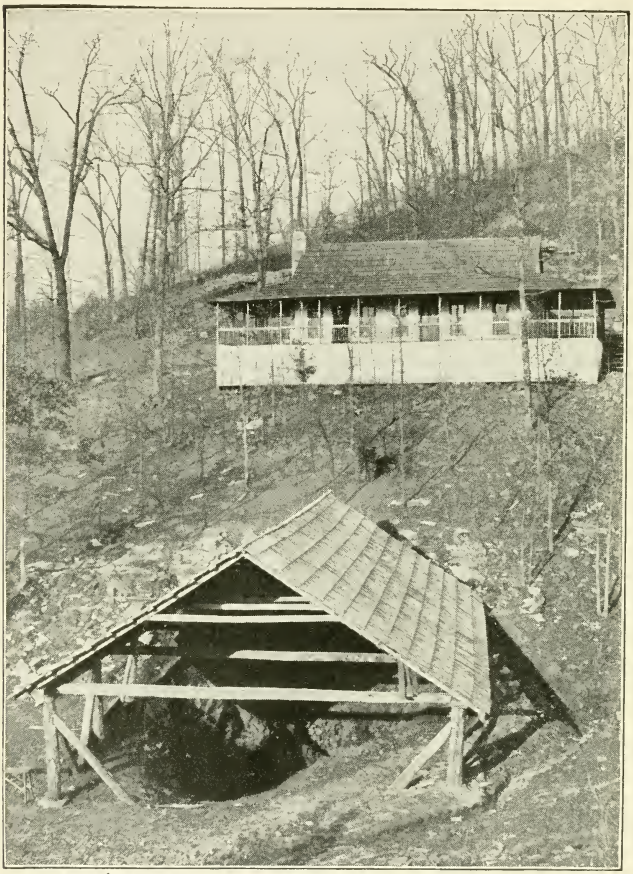
at the strange scenery, and our trip back toward the mouth of the cave was enlivened by several funny stories with which our guide seemed to be well supplied.

I will not describe our return trip, which was indeed very interesting, and we all enjoyed seeing the different places for a second time, as our guide occasionally called out attention to them. The novelty of our surroundings and the pure air kept us from feeling as tired as we would have felt if we had been walking half the distance on the surface. At last we arrive at Echo River, and once more ride on its placid waters. Again we enjoy listening to the beautiful echoes. There is a weird charm about the river that is hard to describe, and as we stepped out of the boat I for one was sorry, and would liked to have crossed its silent waters again and listened to its magic sounds. Clambering up the steep bank, we were soon wending our way through "River Hall," and instead of going back in the same path that we had came, our guide led us to "Bandit Hall." Here we rested for fully ten minutes, as by this time most of us were tired. However, we did not realize what an ordeal awaited us. Of all the crevices that we encountered throughout our underground journey, this part of the cave will take the palm. Our guide requests us to prepare to start through the "Corkscrew." He took the lead and we started climbing up after him. In another part of this book I have an illustration showing a sectional view of this wonderful crevice. The exit of the "Corkscrew" is in the "Kentucky Cliffs" in the main cave avenue, many feet above our heads near the "Rotunda." A trip through the "Corkscrew" is something long to be remembered. After one has been walking through the long route for several hours, he or she begins to think of a comfortable chair on the veranda of the hotel hundreds of feet overhead, where one can stretch out and enjoy a well-earned rest; but here's the "Corkscrew," and before such dreams can be realized we will have to climb, squeeze and struggle through it as best we can. The thousands of people who have gone through this passage as the years have gone by have worn the rocks in some

places as smooth as polished marble. It is very amusing to watch a crowd as they go through the "Corkscrew," especially the fleshy individual who has not entirely forgotten the discomfort of his journey through the "Fat Man's Misery." At last we all get through and find ourselves in the main cave. Here again we see the remains of the saltpeter workers; the timbers used in the old vats have been under ground for nearly a century. We are now moving rapidly across the immense vestibule directly under the hotel, and begin to feel a strong current of air as we get in the "Narrows." It was a welcome sight to get a glimpse of daylight again. We arrive at the iron gate and stand peering through like a crowd of convicts. In the meantime our guide is fumbling in his pocket for the key to open the gate. In a few minutes we are climbing the stone steps and enjoying the glories of the blue sky and sunshine. Coming up the steps one feels the oppressive heat of the outer world, and it takes some minutes before one can get accustomed to the change in temperature.

I have so far described in a very brief manner some of the principal places in the Short and Long Routes. There are also a number of interesting places which are worth visiting if one can afford the time. "Mammoth Dome" is the most beautiful dome in the whole cave. By consulting the map it will be seen that "Mammoth Dome" is near the end of Sparks Avenue, which branches out from "Bandit Hall" below the "Corkscrew." This beautiful dome is about two hundred feet high. Here the guide will burn some colored lights and show "The Egyptian Temple," or, as it is also called, "The Ruins of Karnak." The picture in this book of those majestic columns will give the reader some idea of the beauty of this place; but I might add that no picture can do it justice. "Chief City" and the "New Discovery" are both well worth describing. Going straight ahead in the main cave, beyond the "Star Chamber," we come to "Proctor's Arcade," a name given to this portion of the main channel. In places one can find broken pieces of the old Indian torches scattered in crevices between the rocks. These primitive torches

were used by a bygone race who frequented the cave hundreds of years ago. "Kinney's Arena" is the next name given by the guide to this section of the avenue. Presently, after much rough walking, we arrive at "Wright's Rotunda." Continuing on, we come to the largest chamber in the whole cave, which is "Chief City." It is an enlargement of the avenue, and the enormous arch of the roof spreads over an area of perhaps three acres. "St. Catharine's City" lies beyond us only a short distance from where we stand. What has always been called the end of the cave in this direction, "Ultimo Thule," is situated not a great distance beyond "St. Catharine's City." Near this point in the spring of 1908 a large room of enormous dimensions was discovered. It is a beautiful chamber, and has since been called "Violet City." Thousands of stalactites are to be seen hanging from the walls and ceiling, ranging in size from a pipe stem to ten inches in diameter. The rock formations are white and some of a creamy tint. Any person who makes the "Violet City" or "New Discovery" trip will be well satisfied. The beautiful calcite formations are the admiration of all who have seen them.



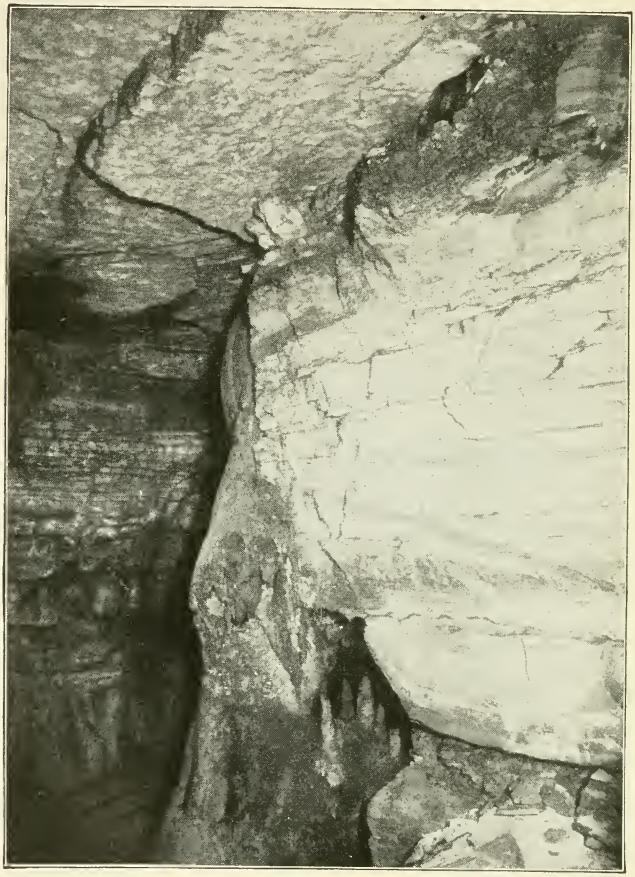
ENTRANCE TO COLOSSAL CAVERN.

COLOSSAL CAVERN

The Colossal Cavern of Kentucky is a beautiful cave situated about a mile and a half from Mammoth Cave. A great many tourists after seeing the Mammoth Cave, take advantage of the opportunity to visit Colossal. Wagons are provided by the enterprising manager, Mr. J. M. Hunt, and both Mr. Hunt and Guide Logsdon spare no pains to make one's visit to the cavern both comfortable, safe and enjoyable. It has been only partly explored as yet, but experienced guides have been at work opening passages, building stairways and generally making the cavern safe for public inspection. The following is a portion of an article on Colossal Cavern published by Appelton's Magazine in October, 1904, and used with the permission of the editor, Mr. Trumbull White:

"The general direction of the cavern is southeast. The entrance is on a hill side, and is only wide enough to admit one person at a time. The uniform temperature of the cavern is 54° F., and in entering it, during the warm months, the visitor experiences quite a chill at first, but soon grows accustomed to it. Lighting his acetylene lamp—which is preferred on account of the fact that it is free from odor and smoke—the visitor upon entering makes a descent of one hundred and twelve feet down a rugged stairway of stones which leads to what has been named the Chinese Room, fifty feet in diameter and with an eight-foot ceiling. The names already bestowed upon the different parts of the cavern are, it is to be hoped, merely provisional. Some will need revision. But the appropriateness of the name, the Chinese Room, is at once apparent. The roof is exquisitely decorated with stalactites of various shapes, many of them resembling Chinese lanterns, and is supported by great white columns and stalagmites. A miniature Chinese wall in the background serves as the bank of a tiny lake of clear, pure water.

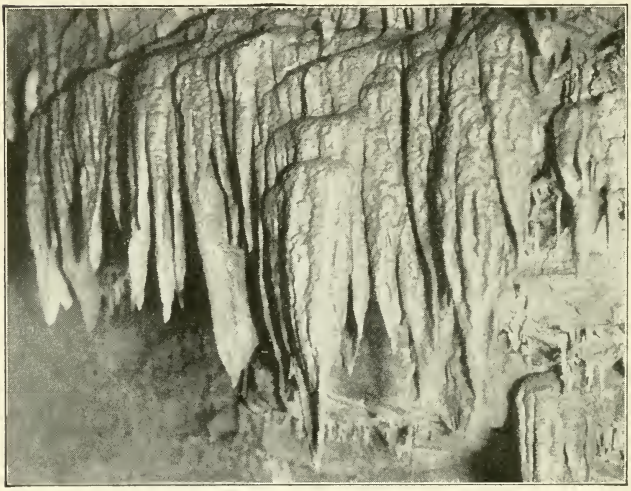
"Several hundred feet beyond the Chinese Room a narrow passage from the main cavern leads to what is known as



HENRY CLAY MONUMENT.

Vaughan's Dome. This is an immense nave-like cavity, four hundred feet long, thirty feet wide, with a roughly carven roof one hundred and ten feet above, and needing but an opening at the end to complete the illusion that the visitor is in some vast cathedral. The walls are worn into great columns that stand regularly along the sides, their tops lost in the darkness of the vaulted dome. Nature teaches a lesson in dimensions in this underground cathedral, the acoustics being perfect, the slightest sound reverberating many times through the nave.

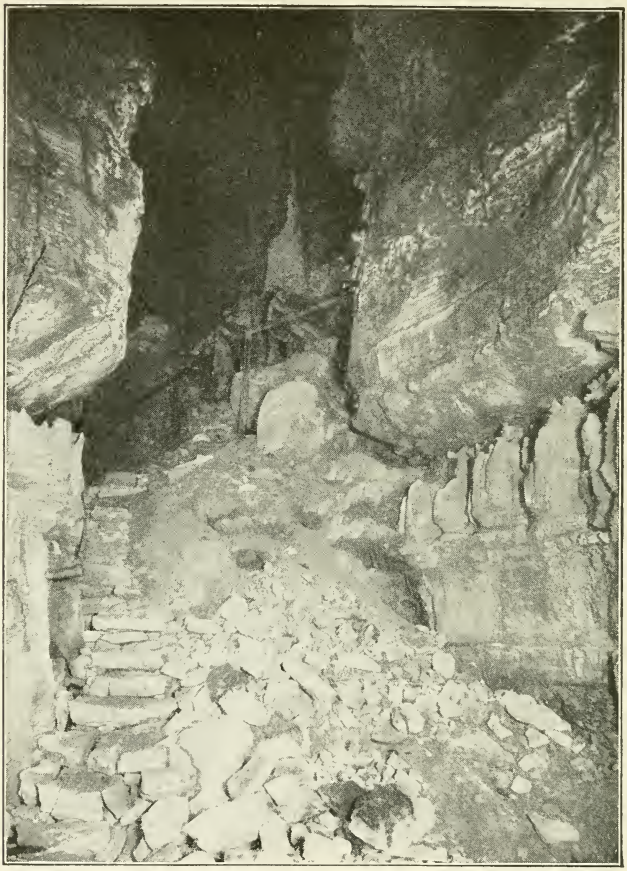
"The greatest surprise, and the feature of the cave upon which its reputation as a wonder undoubtedly rests, is just beyond what has been fancifully named the Henry Clay Monument. It is the Marvelous Colossal Dome, which has fittingly given the entire cavern its name. It is the largest subterranean cavern as yet discovered in the world. It is indeed a temple of majestic grandeur, whose imposing size loses nothing by being but one of the many marvels of this underground wonderland. The dome is cone-shaped, eighty feet in length, while the ceiling rises to the incredible height of one hundred and seventy-four feet, and is entirely lost in the darkness. A fire-basket has been rigged, and, when lit and raised on pulleys, it reveals majestic walls draped with vari-colored strata hanging like tapestries in graceful folds, while the dripping water falling from the far-off ceiling, forms a string of liquid diamonds in the flaring light of the aerial torch. But the fascinating part of the cavern is that which bears the prosaic title of the New Discovery—no name of adequate impressiveness or appropriateness having been found to describe its beauties. The New Discovery is an avenue eight feet wide and sixteen feet high, extending for a distance of six miles—a vast labyrinth of snow incrustations and sculptured forms of every description. The alabaster columns have the transparency of icicles, the walls are frescoed with clusters of grapes, while the ceiling is covered by rosettes of every conceivable shape, and innumerable pendants of wire-like delicacy hang in mid-air. Altogether, this avenue is a maze of kaleidoscopic



IN PEARLY POOL.

wonders dazzling to the eye, with all the fascination and brilliancy of a winter morning.

"There are many natural curiosities among the rocky formations of the cavern. A gigantic lizard, three feet in length, composed of flint and bronzed by the action of the water, slumbers peacefully by the side of a pool in a room known as the Saurian Dome. A fleecy formation of purest white, whose delicate tendrils of gypsum are so small as to resemble fur, has been called the 'Bear Robe.' Ancient and modern tragedies are commemorated by formations known as 'Sampson's Pillar,' the 'Ruins of Carthage,' the 'Ruins of Martinique,' and the 'Iroquois Curtain.' There is also the inevitable 'Register Hall,' where Tom, Dick and Harry and other lesser and greater celebrities will be permitted to inscribe their names upon the smooth limestone walls and provoke posterity by their conspicuous commonplaces. The attractive 'Lover's Lane' nearby leads to the Arrow Head and Festival Hall, over Phosphate Mountain, seventy feet high—an appropriate place for cooling drinks—and right next to the Dining Room. Here is a formation which closely resembles the Full Dinner Pail of recent political notoriety. After having feasted in imagination, the traveler could, if the preceding pathways had permitted, take a spin in his auto or on a bicycle. A beautifully smooth, hard, sandy road, called Bicycle Avenue, stretches invitingly several hundred feet from the Dining Room door. From a nearby cliff-top a miniature Niagara drops into a huge crater, disappearing mysteriously among the rocks, and ultimately emerging no one knows where. On the left is one of the most perfect specimens in existence of a synclinal arch, a typical illustration of underground cave formation. And so one might recount the almost endless array of curiosities, about which the nimble imagination could readily weave innumerable legends. The largest single room in any known underground cave is called the Great Bend. It is sixty feet high, one hundred and twenty feet wide, and half a mile long—a banqueting hall fit for the gods in adornment and large enough to seat the combined



COLOSSAL DOME.

political conventions of all the parties in the country! The temperature would be ideal for midsummer gatherings of this character, while the tedium of business could be relieved by fascinating free trips to the various wonders of the cavern.

"After having traversed nearly fifteen miles in his inspection of this marvelous subterranean region, the visitor returns to the world of sunshine and green grass once more, loath to leave the land of enchantment, and feeling that half its beauty has not been revealed."

I wish to thank a number of gentlemen for helping me prepare this little book. I am under an obligation to Mr. C. R. Blackall, of Philadelphia, editor of "Young People" and other Sunday School publications, who kindly gave me permission to use his map of the cave, which was prepared some years ago after much painstaking labor on his part. Also Mr. Trumbull White, editor of Appleton's Magazine, kindly gave me permission to use a portion of the article on Colossal Cavern. I also thank Mr. W. B. Barry, advertising agent of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company, as well as Mr. J. M. Hunt, agent and manager of the Colossal Cavern; both of these gentlemen have assisted me. The pictures of the old guides, as well as a lot of information, was furnished to me by a gentlemanly colored man living in the vicinity of the cave, and I take this means of thanking him for his kindness. The pictures in this book are from drawings, a few are taken from photographs and some are copied from old prints. The "Corkscrew" is only the artist's conception of that interesting crevice, while the scene on Echo River is sketched from memory. It depicts the author of this little book, with a merry party of tourists, listening to the echoes.

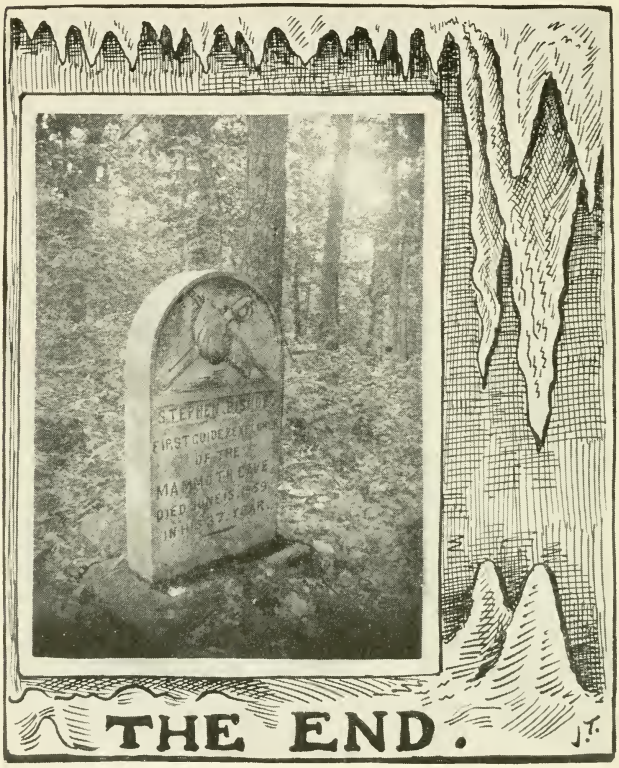
Signatures of Our Party

Signatures of Our Party

Signatures of Our Party

Signatures of Our Party

MAY 17 1909



MAP OF THE MAMMOTH CAVE.

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DISTANCE IN YARDS, BY CURVES, FROM ENTRANCE.

ANGELICA'S BOWER	1726.	GREAT WESTERN	3370.
BACON CHAMBER	1570.	LOVER'S LEAP	1210.
BOTTOMLESS PIT	1192.	MAMMOTH DOME	1870.
CASCADE HALL	2820.	MARTHA'S VINEYARD	5820.
CHIEF CITY	2690.	OLE BULL'S CONCERT HALL	4170.
CORK SCREW	380.	OLIVIA DOMES	3870.
CROGHAN'S HALL	7850.	ROCKY MOUNTAINS	7420.
ECHO RIVER	2320.	ROTUNDA	220.
END OF PENSACOLA AVE.	1957.	STANDING ROCKS	647.
GIANTS COFFIN	875.	STAR CHAMBER	1140
GOTHIC CHAPEL	882.	WRIGHT'S ROTUNDA	1858.

AIR LINE DISTANCE IN YARDS, FROM M.C.HOTEL.

BACON CHAMBER	150.
CHIEF CITY	1900.
CROGHAN'S HALL	3000.
DEAD SEA.	325.
ECHO RIVER	750.
GIANTS COFFIN	600.
GREAT WESTERN	1500.
MAMMOTH DOMES	250
MARTHA'S VINEYARD.	3600.

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BROADWAY AVENUE. BOTTOMLESS PIT. CORINS DOME. MAIN CAVE. RESTAURANT. BARN AVE. SADDLE PIT. STAR CHAMBER. GOTHIC AVE. GIANTS COFFIN. BLACKSMITH AVE. STAR CHAMBER. BRIDAL CHAMBER. OLD INDIAN. GREAT WALK. PURGATORY. LAKES. ECHO RIVER. INFERNAL REGIONS. WRIGHTS ROTUNDA. CROGHANS HALL. END OF AVE. NARROW RIVER. WAY SIDE. FAIRY GROTTO. SALTPETRE CAVE. CHIEF CITY. ST. CATHERINES GRO. AVE TO BLUE SPRINGS. PASS OF KOOM. OLIVIA DOMES. GIANTS COFFIN. DEAD SEA. OLE BULLS CONCERT HALL. STILLMANS AVE. PANAMA R. CLEVELANDS CABINET. DIAMOND GROTTO. CHARLOTTE'S GROTTO. DISMAL WALK. ROCKY MOUNTAINS. FLORA'S GROTTO. ST. CECELIA'S GROTTO. MAMMOTH DOME. BATH HOUSE CLIMB. FLOWERED CROSS. MARYS BOWER. WASHINGTON HALL. SAHARA. SALEMS ALCOVE. HALLSTROM AND CROGHAN'S HALL. MARTHA'S VINEYARD.

...ays from which the accompanying map was ...re made by the undersigned during the sum... ...3 and 1871. For a portion of the route, the ... of the railroad and the general direc... ...k, but for the most part the ... C. R. BLACKALL

STOP AT THE
NEW
Mentz Hotel
E. H. MENTZ, Prop.
Glasgow Junction, Ky.

Modern Throughout
Lighted with Gas
Hot and Cold Baths

Nine Miles to
Mammoth Cave

MAMMOTH CAVE
CONFECTIONERY

Choice Bon Bons, Chocolates, Candies, Nuts, Fruit,
Ice Cream Soda, Fruit Cakes, Crackers, Ice Cream

B. F. CONWAY & SONS, Glasgow Junction, Ky.

Souvenirs

JOHN THOMPSON,
Pyrographic Artist,
Glasgow Junction, Ky.

Cave Books,
Leather Dolls, Purses,
Hand Bags,
Watch Fobs,
Burnt Leather,
Pillow Covers,
Post Cards and Cave
Curios.

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